(d) whether Government considers to undertake any specific safety measures to protect them from harassment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Some cases of harassment of Indian workers by their sponsors in the Gulf countries on account of denial of salary and other benefits have come to the notice of Government.

(b) Indian Missions/Posts abroad render all possible assistance for the welfare of workers and also take up the matter with the employers/ sponsors and local Government authorities. Generally, the grievances are redressed with the help of the Indian Missions/Posts.

(c) A few such cases have been reported.

(d) There are additional measures inplace for recruitment of Indian housemaids to protect them from harassment. These include age requirement of 30 years and above, attestation of documents by Indian Missions/Posts and recommendation of Mission/Post on *bona fides* of prospective employer and employer personally signing the stipulated contract.

Resumption of rail link between India and Pakistan

2002. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan propose to renew rail link between the two countries shortly;

(b) if so, by when the train is likely to start running; and

(c) whether foolproof arrangements have been made to ensure that smuggling of narcotics and other contraband do not take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Prime Minister had on April 18, 2003 extended the hand of friendship once again to Pakistan. Subsequently, India has taken the initiative to move in a step-by-step manner to normalize diplomatic and other links between the two

countries. Both countries have appointed High Commissioners and the Delhi-Lahore bus service has been resumed with effect from July 11, 2003. Pakistan has indicated its willingness to host technical level discussions for resumption of civil aviation. Both sides have released prisoners. There have also been important exchanges in the context of business, cultural and people-to-people contracts.

Pakistan on July 24, 2003 formally suggested meeting between railway authorities of the two countries to discuss modalities to resume railway service. India would move ahead in a step-by-step manner building on the success achieved and the confidence generated.

(c) The security agencies of the Central and State Governments maintain a high level of alertness and are fully geared to check illegal cross border activities.

Proposal mooted by Pakistani MPs to check cross-border terrorism

2003. DR. A.R. KIDWAI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Pakistani Members of Parliament delegation that visited India in the month of May, 2003 had mooted a proposal of having patrols along the Indo-Pak border to check cross-border terrorism;

(b) if so, whether it is a sound proposal and will check the infiltration from both sides;

(c) whether India has considered this view and has initiated discussion with Pakistan on these lines;

(d) if so, to what extent both the countries have agreed;

(e) whether India is ready for this; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (f) From time to time, Pakistan has suggested that there should be some form of international or third party monitoring to verify whether cross border infiltration is continuing or not.